

InStep

A NEWSLETTER FOR ROLE MODELS

Stepping Stones Goes Back to School



Welcome to a new school year and some fresh new initiatives in the Stepping Stones program!

One of those initiatives is the redesign of this newsletter. As Stepping Stones grows and evolves, you can expect *InStep* to grow and evolve with it. I encourage you to share *InStep* with your colleagues and let me know what you think of it. I welcome your comments and suggestions for future articles.

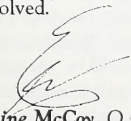
Another new initiative this fall is the introduction of a new classroom resource — Role Model Profiles. Details on this exciting project and a sample profile can be found on

page four. Thank you to the role models who are featured in the initial profiles.

Also in this issue of *InStep* is an article on the recent report, *We're Here, Listen to Us! A Survey of Young Women in Canada*.

Authored by two Alberta women, the report suggests we need to do more to encourage young girls to have confidence in their futures. And we must find ways to include them as an integral part of our society. The report's authors tell us that young women need to hear from adult women about what they can expect of the world they will inherit from us.

Stepping Stones provides an excellent opportunity for you as role models to encourage discussion and the sharing of ideas, and perhaps most importantly, to listen to what young women are saying. It could be a unique learning experience for everyone involved.


Elaine McCoy, Q.C.
Minister Responsible for
Women's Issues

Did You Know?

■ In recent years, female film directors have become more common. The very first woman director was Alice Guy. She and her husband, Herbert Blache, founded the Solax production company and by 1915, she had produced over 270 films. Few women directors survived the transition from silent films to the talkies. Between 1933 and 1943, Dorothy Arzner was Hollywood's only female director.

■ The first Canadian woman to become a gas pipeline inspector was Leslie Jane Benson. Benson graduated from University of Guelph with a B.Sc. in Engineering in 1981. She is now a project engineer with Ganaraska Region Conservation Authority in Port Hope, Ontario.

■ Three sisters of the Grey Nuns, Sister Superior Leblanc Emery and Sisters Lamy and Alphonse, were the first educated white women to come

to western Canada. Arriving in Lac Ste. Anne in 1859, after an 85-day journey from Montreal, their purpose was to administer to the sick in the aboriginal population and to open a school. Threatened by starvation, they moved to St. Albert where they established the first hospital in central Alberta in 1891. Three years later, they started the General Hospital in Edmonton, forerunner of the present day Edmonton General.

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Young Women Speak Out . . . and We Should be Listening

Young women may be harmed by the mixed messages they get from society: to be aggressive enough to become astronauts or entrepreneurs, yet retain the traditionally "feminine" qualities of "pretty and docile."

It isn't an easy balancing act and, say the Calgary authors of a report on teenage girls, the pressure may hinder young women from achieving their dreams.

The report, *We're Here, Listen to Us!*, is based on a recent survey of 3,207 Canadian teens. The study was commissioned by the Canadian Advisory Council on the Status of Women to find out how young Canadian girls see themselves — in the world they live in today and in the future.

"Young girls are looking forward to what they are supposed to be as adults," says co-author Eliane Leslau Silverman. "But they are not rewarded for being aggressive. The message is to be passive — that they should not make their presence too well felt."

The survey found that young women are very interested in the world around them. Political and social issues such as the environment, war and peace, violence and crime, poverty, racism, sexism and discrimination concern many of them, the survey found. But, at the same time, teens often feel alienated from these issues, and powerless to affect the world around them.

The survey found that "self-



Karina MacKenzie

esteem decreases over time as young women gradually become more aware of their status in a society that values them less than their male peers." The survey also found that young men have a stronger sense of self-satisfaction than young women and that the difference between the genders increases with age.

Karina MacKenzie, a grade 10 student at Ross Sheppard Composite High School in Edmonton, says she sees evidence of low self-esteem among her classmates. "Some expect too much of themselves," she explains. "They compare themselves to other people and try to be all those people. Then they feel inadequate."

"That's no surprise," says Silverman. "With the messages bombarding them, we all look inadequate."

Being exposed to role models is essential in developing young girls' confidence and

helps them understand that they can be powerful and influential citizens.

Janine Reschny and Jessica Krukewich are both grade 11 students at Archbishop MacDonald High School in Edmonton. The women in their lives have served as good role models and have helped guide the girls' decision making. "I've always wanted to be a teacher," says Jessica. "I like learning and I like helping other people. This year I became an assistant volleyball coach. The teacher is great. She keeps giving me encouragement and she's always right in there with me."

Janine is also interested in teaching, but thinks that being a legal stenographer might also be interesting. "I think it would be great to work in a law office," she says. "Reading all those cases would be interesting. My mother's friend does that, and she really enjoys herself."

While many young girls, like Janine and Jessica, are comfortable with traditionally female occupations like teacher and stenographer, it seems that few consider non-traditional occupations. Not that they feel inadequate — the idea simply never presents itself. For instance, the survey found that "women are virtually invisible in the list of public figures young people consider important or interesting . . ."

Further, while these young women are confident of their futures, they are often "under-aware" of workplace issues such as pay equity, sexual harassment, workers' benefits, compensation and unemployment insurance.

Silverman says families, schools and other institutions should do more to raise the self-esteem of young women and break down the stereotypes that clog young women's ambition. In particular, she says adult women can do much by sharing their experiences and ambition with younger women.

"Stepping Stones is a very good idea," says Silverman. "We need a lot more communication between older and younger women, and not just around workplace issues. Both groups need to listen to each other."

For a free copy of the report, *We're Here, Listen to Us!*, contact the Canadian Advisory Council on the Status of Women at 1-613-992-4975, quoting No. 92-S-183.

The World of Teenage Women

The typical teenage girl is not as self-centred or boy crazy as most people think, according to the survey. Parents, family, friends and school rank very highly on the list of concerns of the teens surveyed. Boyfriends and sex were low priorities for most girls. Also:

- twice as many young women than young men say they don't feel good about themselves.
- young women tend to feel they need "the right packaging" to succeed in their personal and public lives.
- one in five young women say they are under a lot of stress.
- twenty nine per cent feel they are at risk from

physical and other types of abuse.

- only three per cent of young women feel they won't finish high school.
- ninety per cent say they expect to be working 10 years after school.
- young women are less concerned about their boyfriends than vice versa.
- over 90 per cent say they have the same opportunities in school as young men.
- only seven of the 100 politicians young women listed as wanting to come to their school were women. In fact, three of those were politicians' wives.
- information regarding politics was cited by young women as being the most difficult to obtain.

The message for us: we don't take young women seriously enough.



Janine Reschny



Jessica Krukewich

New Women's Group Means Business

A new self-help and networking organization for business women and women executives and entrepreneurs has started in Alberta.

The western branch of the Canadian Association of Women Executives and Entrepreneurs (CAWEE) is the brainchild of Bev Campbell, a long-time business woman and present manager of Gallery Venus and Framing in St. Albert.

"Businesswomen need a forum to share and exchange ideas," says Campbell. "They need a place where they can express their ideas, where they will be listened to."

The Edmonton area CAWEE branch, the first in

western Canada, will offer more than networking or social support. The group will also to give women in business important visibility.

"We are going to be letting people know we are here," says Campbell. "We are 50 per cent of the population but we are not taking part (in society) as we should be."

Campbell was inspired by a similar women's group she was introduced to in Miami, Florida. She was impressed by their pro-active approach, such as visiting the state capital to voice concerns about various issues.

Unable to find a similar group here — the only other CAWEE group started in

Toronto in 1976 — she decided to start a local branch affiliated with the national organization.

Campbell wants to see the CAWEE branch lobby actively on issues of concern to businesswomen and on "people issues" such as abuse and discrimination. So far, the response of women attending meetings of the new branch pleases Campbell.

"These charter members will have the chance to get in on the ground floor and make this organization what they want it to be," she says. Campbell says she would eventually like to establish a permanent office with a resource library and research staff.

Criteria for membership in the new branch is flexible. The

national organization says members must own or manage a business or non-profit organization, or be a middle (or higher level) executive. Other women can join if they are looking at a career change or, "if they are women who see there is a need for change for women," says Campbell.

Membership fees are \$200 annually with an additional \$60 administration fee paid to the national office. An early registration fee of \$150 (plus the \$60) is in effect until the end of October.

For more information about the western branch of the Canadian Association of Women Executives and Entrepreneurs, call Bev Campbell at 487-6817.

New Stepping Stones Resource Introduced

Stepping Stones is introducing a new classroom resource this fall called Role Model Profiles.

"We are excited about this new initiative because it's unique," said Stepping Stones Provincial Coordinator Janice White.

Each page profiles a role model's work experience and features a photo of her "on the job." On the reverse side is specific career information including required education and training, potential income, and employment opportunities.

Gina Vivone-Vernon, Coordinator, Health/CALM/Physical Education, Curriculum Branch of Alberta Education is also enthusiastic about the project. "The Role Model Profiles have great potential as a valuable learning tool and will be an excellent way to build on the career aspect of the existing curriculum," she said. "This resource has very useful applications and provides teachers with the flexibility to use it in a variety of ways in the classroom."

The Role Model Profiles will soon be distributed to junior and senior high schools in Alberta. Teachers and guidance counsellors will be encouraged to make them readily available to students by putting them in a binder or photocopying them as hand-outs.

The feature on Dr. Lori Grandan (opposite) is an example of one of the new Stepping Stones Role Model Profiles.

Lori Grandan, Dentist



Dr. Lori Grandan

Lori Grandan didn't set out to be a dentist. "It became an option in my fourth year of university," she says. "I was intending to go into research, but when I was working as a lab assistant I could see the problems in trying to get funding. I didn't want the struggle."

"I applied (to dentistry) with a friend of mine, was accepted and decided to go. I'm really glad I've done it."

Lori always liked science in school, and got a lot of encouragement from her teachers. "It's easy to love something you're good at," she says. Now she finds a lot of

satisfaction from her career. "I like the variety of the work — not only the technical and health care work, but being a businessperson and a manager. You have a lot of control over your life — how hard you want to work. You can work part-time, no problem."

But dentistry has become consumer oriented, offering appointments early in the morning and after typical work hours. "We take turns working early," says Lori. "Some days I work at 7 a.m., some days I start at noon, I work some Saturdays."

But the irregular work hours suit Lori's personality. "I

like change. I like to try new things. I don't like to get in a rut." Being in a rapidly changing field means that Lori's work will change along with new developments and discoveries. "There are going to be much better materials coming out very soon," says Lori. That means keeping up with the literature, the materials, the techniques . . ."

As a dentist, Lori could specialize in any number of areas: pediatric dentistry, braces, root canals, surgery, restorative work . . . but while the scientific aspect of dentistry is fascinating, Lori is also gratified by the personal relationships she develops with her clients. "Getting along with people well is important," she says. "Most people come in with bad memories — they're fearful. I think that being female helps you a lot. We have many, many people asking for a woman dentist. People think we are more gentle — and small fingers are an advantage."

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We invite your comments, suggestions and story ideas.

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